

Widening Participation

Professor Audrey Mullender

Rachel Hemstock

Partnerships

- Partnerships with voluntary sector organisations and with learners themselves
- Our partners include Aspire Oxford, The Ley Community, Eaves Housing, Florence Park Children's Centre
- 'The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with their teacher' (Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed)'
- Research organisations supporting disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised groups within community (and beyond)
- Develop relationships with organisations and determine need
- Negotiate terms of partnership between college and organisation
- One individual nominated, at the outset, to liaise with partner organisation and learners allowing for consistency and support, where necessary, for any issues arising
- Close liaison, regular monitoring and reviews of individual learners' needs is crucial
- End of term – a formal appraisal

What makes it different?

- Ability to deliver in different settings depending on learner/partner needs (taking the learning to the learner)
- Delivery at the college (demystifying educational establishments)
- Small, specialised, dedicated classes
- Embedded collaboration
- Bespoke curricula for each partnership's requirements and individual learning needs
- Appreciation and acceptance of difficult life situations of learners and a commitment to support the learners through the educational process
- 'Act as sympathetic observers with an attitude of understanding towards what they see' (Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed)

Pedagogical Approach

- Productive relationship between learner and teacher
- Negotiate learning
- Put yourself in learners' shoes
- Use their language 'Often educators speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the people they address' (Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed).
- Manageable chunks
- Critical Literacy/Mantle of the Expert – empowering learners
- Transformative learning
- Encourage independent learning
- Meaningful application
- Double loop learning
- Recognising achievement (even if not a formal qualification)

Outcomes and Benefits to Learners

- Certificate presentations (formal recognition)
- Qualification for CV
- Increased literacy/numeracy skills
- Increased social and interpersonal skills
- Increased confidence/self-esteem
- Assists learners to form and maintain appropriate and respectful relationships with their peers
- More positive outlook
- Personal transformation
- 'Learning bug'
- Intergenerational element of social mobility

Progression to further courses

- Following initial engagement through outreach courses learners often progress on to further courses
- Information, advice and guidance regarding further courses needs to be built into programme
- Support with the application process is crucial

Learner experiences

- *'It is great that Ruskin come to Eaves because this is a safe environment for us here. We look after each other because we've all been through situations and have a tough past. We feel confident to focus on our literacy and numeracy here. If we went to college we'd be so busy worrying about everyone else, trying to act normal and fit in front of them all. We can be real and get an excellent education'*
- *'The courses were broken down really well and concise. I was able to understand and relate to my life. The topics were easy to grasp because of the exercises. She repeated tasks & topics in different ways until you found one that clicked with you. The pace was just right, she adapted it to suit the group; she also worked with us individually'*

More Learner Experiences...

- *'This course made maths seem approachable and has given me the confidence to look at further education'*
- *'People may feel guilty that they don't know about these subjects, but when you come that's not the case, you feel very relaxed and at ease'*
- *'I will definitely go on to do other courses. I felt embarrassed to go to college, thought that I wouldn't be able to keep up with the pace because I didn't have a foundation. Now I feel like I have that foundation'*
- *'This course does a lot for your emotional wellbeing; this morning I was up and cooking breakfast, I don't normally do this. The courses are a good workout for your brain. It has done a lot for my confidence and self esteem, I would like to do more!'*

Outcomes and Benefits for your Organisation

- Increase in enrolments
- Progression of learners into mainstream college courses
- Community integration
- Enhanced profile in the community
- Learner diversity
- Job satisfaction for staff
- Staff development
- Changing Lives
- Social mobility